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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/724,404	12/01/2003	Shuichi Suzuki	67336-015	8895

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Washington, DC 20005-3096

EXAMINER

ALEJANDRO, RAYMOND

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1745

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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05/18/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

**Advisory Action
Before the Filing of an Appeal Brief**

Application No.

10/724,404

Applicant(s)

SUZUKI ET AL.

Examiner

Raymond Alejandro

Art Unit

1745

--The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

THE REPLY FILED 07 May 2007 FAILS TO PLACE THIS APPLICATION IN CONDITION FOR ALLOWANCE.

1. ☒ The reply was filed after a final rejection, but prior to or on the same day as filing a Notice of Appeal. To avoid abandonment of this application, applicant must timely file one of the following replies: (1) an amendment, affidavit, or other evidence, which places the application in condition for allowance; (2) a Notice of Appeal (with appeal fee) in compliance with 37 CFR 41.31; or (3) a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) in compliance with 37 CFR 1.114. The reply must be filed within one of the following time periods:

- a) ☒ The period for reply expires 3 months from the mailing date of the final rejection.
b) ☐ The period for reply expires on: (1) the mailing date of this Advisory Action, or (2) the date set forth in the final rejection, whichever is later. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of the final rejection.

Examiner Note: If box 1 is checked, check either box (a) or (b). ONLY CHECK BOX (b) WHEN THE FIRST REPLY WAS FILED WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE FINAL REJECTION. See MPEP 706.07(f).

Extensions of time may be obtained under 37 CFR 1.136(a). The date on which the petition under 37 CFR 1.136(a) and the appropriate extension fee have been filed is the date for purposes of determining the period of extension and the corresponding amount of the fee. The appropriate extension fee under 37 CFR 1.17(a) is calculated from: (1) the expiration date of the shortened statutory period for reply originally set in the final Office action; or (2) as set forth in (b) above, if checked. Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of the final rejection, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

NOTICE OF APPEAL

2. ☐ The Notice of Appeal was filed on _____. A brief in compliance with 37 CFR 41.37 must be filed within two months of the date of filing the Notice of Appeal (37 CFR 41.37(a)), or any extension thereof (37 CFR 41.37(e)), to avoid dismissal of the appeal. Since a Notice of Appeal has been filed, any reply must be filed within the time period set forth in 37 CFR 41.37(a).

AMENDMENTS

3. ☐ The proposed amendment(s) filed after a final rejection, but prior to the date of filing a brief, will not be entered because
(a) ☐ They raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search (see NOTE below);
(b) ☐ They raise the issue of new matter (see NOTE below);
(c) ☐ They are not deemed to place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal; and/or
(d) ☐ They present additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims.

NOTE: _____. (See 37 CFR 1.116 and 41.33(a)).

4. ☐ The amendments are not in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121. See attached Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment (PTOL-324).
5. ☐ Applicant's reply has overcome the following rejection(s): _____.
6. ☐ Newly proposed or amended claim(s) _____ would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claim(s).
7. ☒ For purposes of appeal, the proposed amendment(s): a) ☐ will not be entered, or b) ☒ will be entered and an explanation of how the new or amended claims would be rejected is provided below or appended.
The status of the claim(s) is (or will be) as follows:
Claim(s) allowed: _____.
Claim(s) objected to: _____.
Claim(s) rejected: 1-2 & 4.
Claim(s) withdrawn from consideration: _____.

AFFIDAVIT OR OTHER EVIDENCE

8. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence filed after a final action, but before or on the date of filing a Notice of Appeal will not be entered because applicant failed to provide a showing of good and sufficient reasons why the affidavit or other evidence is necessary and was not earlier presented. See 37 CFR 1.116(e).
9. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence filed after the date of filing a Notice of Appeal, but prior to the date of filing a brief, will not be entered because the affidavit or other evidence failed to overcome all rejections under appeal and/or appellant fails to provide a showing of a good and sufficient reasons why it is necessary and was not earlier presented. See 37 CFR 41.33(d)(1).
10. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence is entered. An explanation of the status of the claims after entry is below or attached.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION/OTHER

11. ☒ The request for reconsideration has been considered but does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because:
See next page.
12. ☐ Note the attached Information Disclosure Statement(s). (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s). _____.
13. ☐ Other: _____.

Raymond Alejandro
Primary Examiner
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Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments filed 05/07/07 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
2. As best understood, the main contention of applicant's arguments against the Petricevic reference is grounded on the assertion that "*Petricevic, at column 2, lines 50-54, merely states 'in order to meet the abovementioned requirement, modified carbon papers i.e. carbon papers which are densified on the surfaces...these materials are not satisfactory in respect of surface smooth and pore size'. Note that the modified carbon papers of Petricevic are not satisfactory regarding smoothness.*". First of all, **MPEP 2131.05 [R-5] Nonanalogous or Disparaging Prior Art** establishes the following:

"Arguments that the alleged anticipatory prior art is nonanalogous art' or teaches away from the invention' or is not recognized as solving the problem solved by the claimed invention, [are] not germane' to a rejection under section 102." Twin Disc, Inc. v. United States, 231 USPQ 417, 424 (Cl. Ct. 1986) (quoting In re Self, 671 F.2d 1344, 213 USPQ 1, 7 (CCPA 1982)). See also State Contracting & Eng'g Corp. v. Condotte America, Inc., 346 F.3d 1057, 1068, 68 USPQ2d 1481, 1488 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (The question of whether a reference is analogous art is not relevant to whether that reference anticipates. A reference may be directed to an entirely different problem than the one addressed by the inventor, or may be from an entirely different field of endeavor than that of the claimed invention, yet the reference is still anticipatory if it explicitly or inherently discloses every limitation recited in the claims.)."

"A reference is no less anticipatory if, after disclosing the invention, the reference then disparages it. The question whether a reference "teaches away" from the invention is

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inapplicable to an anticipation analysis. Celeritas Technologies Ltd. v. Rockwell International Corp., 150 F.3d 1354, 1361, 47 USPQ2d 1516, 1522-23 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (The prior art was held to anticipate the claims even though it taught away from the claimed invention. "The fact that a modem with a single carrier data signal is shown to be less than optimal does not vitiate the fact that it is disclosed."). >See *Upsher-Smith Labs. v. PamLab, LLC, 412 F.3d 1319, 1323, 75 USPQ2d 1213, 1215 (Fed. Cir. 2005)(claimed composition that expressly excluded an ingredient held anticipated by reference composition that optionally included that same ingredient);* < see also *Atlas Powder Co. v. IRECO, Inc., 190 F.3d 1342, 1349, 51 USPQ2d 1943, 1948 (Fed. Cir. 1999) (Claimed composition was anticipated by prior art reference that inherently met claim limitation of "sufficient aeration" even though reference taught away from air entrapment or purposeful aeration.)."*

Thus, applicant's arguments that the Petricevi reference discloses that the modified carbon papers are not satisfactory regarding surface smoothness are inapplicable to overcome the anticipation analysis thereof as presented in the Final Rejection dated 02/09/07.

Furthermore, the Petricevi reference also discloses a carbon foam (COL 1, lines 55-56), a carbon matrix (COL 1, line 59), a support skeleton in the form of carbon fibers (COL 2, line 10-11). All of these materials can be used as the claimed substrate for holding the catalyst material. Therefore, contrary to applicant's assertion, to certain extent, the Petricevi reference also relates to carbon substrate. As such, the examiner largely disagrees with applicant's apparent comment that the Petricevi reference is only related to cellulose membrane.

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3. With respect to the rejection under Section 103 (the AAPA in view of Kuroki et al), applicant has raised the argument that "*Kuroki discusses the surface of the gas diffusion layer which is in contact with the gasket. In contrast to Kuroki, the roughness limitation of claim 1 is on a side in contact with the catalyst layer*". Well, the point that applicant is overlooking is that the present claims are entirely silent as to the specific intended "contact". For instance, well known in the art is that fuel cell components/elements can be: a) in direct physical contact, b) in electrical contact, c) in non-electrical contact (nonconductive contact), and/or d) in operative contact. Certainly, the present claims do not define what kind of contact is intended. Therefore, in its broadest reasonable interpretation, it is contended that the combination of the gas diffusion layer having the specifically claimed surface roughness Ra in contact with the gasket is either in electrical contact or operative contact with the catalyst material/layer. Accordingly, the combined teachings of the prior art provide the necessary functional and structural interrelationship to fully satisfy the applicant's requirement as instantly claimed.



RAYMOND ALEJANDRO
PRIMARY EXAMINER